

Eastern Sierra Nevada & Northern Mojave Desert Recreation Information Update December 15 - 21, 2010

Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

Junction of US HWY 395 & SR 136
Lone Pine, California 93545

(760) 876-6222
TDD 876-6228

Open Daily: 8:00am to 5:00pm

ROADS: Major Eastern Sierra roads are open, including HWY 395. Trans Sierra roads - SR 120 (Tioga Pass), SR 108 (Sonora Pass) and SR 4 (Ebbets Pass) are closed for the winter. SR 89 (Monitor Pass) is closed for the winter. South SR 158 is open to June Lake Village. Mono Mills road (SR 120) and June Lake Loop (SR 158) are closed for the winter. Weather and road conditions can change rapidly this time of year; mountain passes are subject to immediate controls and/or closures. Drivers headed to the mountains need to be sure their vehicles are equipped with chains, including those with snowtires. For California highway conditions and construction schedules, call 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623), or visit the web at www.dot.ca.gov. For Nevada roads, call 1-877-NVROADS (1-877-687-6237), or visit the website at www.nevadadot.com/traveler/roads.

SR270, the **BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK** road is closed for the winter. The Lake Mary road is open to Tamarack Ski Center parking area. The Rock Creek road is open to the SnoPark at East Fork. In Bishop Creek, SR 168 is open to Aspendell and the South Lake road is open to Bishop Creek Lodge. In the White Mountains, the road to the **ANCIENT BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST AND SCHULMAN GROVE** is open to the Sierra View gate (4x4 recommended). The Big Pine Canyon road is open.

Major highways through **DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK** are open. The Big Pine, Titus Canyon, Devils Golf Course, West Side, Salt Creek, and Charcoal Kilns dirt roads are open. The North Pass Road into Saline Valley is open; high clearance 4x4 recommended (carry chains). The South Pass road into Saline Valley is posted closed due to washouts. Mountain roads are closed by snow. Rangers ask visitors traveling to remote desert valleys to leave a complete itinerary at home, obtain a good backcountry road map and be prepared for the unexpected. Drivers need to be sure their vehicle is in good condition and to carry an additional spare tire, extra gas, food and water. Check the website at www.nps.gov/deva for conditions and descriptions of backcountry roads ("Plan Your Visit & Things To Do" section).

WEATHER: A weak low will move over Southern California Thursday, producing a chance of rain over the Mojave Desert. On Friday, a strong winter storm will move into Northern California, followed by a series of storms that are expected to produce wide spread precipitation in the Eastern Sierra and Northern Mojave through the middle of next week. Heavy snow and gusty winds are forecast for the Sierra Nevada, with the snow level from 6,000 to 7,000 feet in the Southern Sierra. Highs have been in the 20s in the mountains, mid 60s in the Owens Valley and near 70 in Death Valley, with the lows ranging from teens in the mountains, to the 40s in Death Valley.

CAMPGROUNDS: **INYO COUNTY** campgrounds are open. The **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT** campgrounds at Tuttle Creek (fee/no water) and the Pleasant Valley Pit (fee/no water) are open. Additional privately operated campgrounds & RV facilities are open throughout the area.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST, Lone Pine to Lee Vining - the following campgrounds are open: Lone Pine (no water/no fee), Bitterbrush (no water/no fee), Holiday in Rock Creek (no water/no fee).

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK - Yosemite Valley has sites open and reservable. Reservations are accepted five months in advance on the 15th of each month, for a one-month block through recreation.gov; or call 1-877-444-6777. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis at Wawona (SR 41), Hodgdon Meadows (SR 120 near Big Oak Flat) and Camp Four walk-in campground in Yosemite Valley. For Yosemite National Park information, visit the web site at www.nps.gov/yose.

In **DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK**, open campgrounds include: Furnace Creek, Sunset, Texas Spring, Stovepipe Wells, Mesquite Springs, Emigrant (tent only/free) and Wildrose (free). RV hook-ups are available at Furnace Creek Ranch, Stovepipe Wells Village and Panamint Springs Resort. For more information, visit the park web site at www.nps.gov/deva.

Campsites are available throughout **SEQUOIA/KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS** on a first-come/first-served and reservation basis. For recorded information to plan a visit to the park, call 1-559-565-3341 or visit the web at www.nps.gov/seki.

RED ROCK CANYON STATE PARK, on SR 14 south of Ridgecrest, offers great desert camping.

Cooperating Agencies of the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

Inyo County

California - Department of Transportation

Bureau of Land Management

California - Department of Fish & Game

National Park Service

Mono County

City of Los Angeles - Department of Water & Power

USDA - Forest Service

FISHING: The **OWENS RIVER** from Crowley Lake to Tinnemaha Reservoir (including Pleasant Valley Reservoir) and **DIAZ LAKE** are open to year-round fishing. Copies of California fishing regulations are available on the web at www.dfg.ca.gov.

HUNTING: General hunting seasons for quail, pheasants, chukar and doves are open. Waterfowl season for ducks (including Mergansers), common Moorhen, American Coot and geese is open. The Goodale Buck Hunt (Inyo County/Sierra Escarpment) and the Round Valley Junior Buck Hunt (Mono-Inyo County/Sierra Escarpment) for deer are open through 12/19.

WINTER SPORTS: **MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN** is open with a 4 to 8 foot base of packed powder and machine groomed snow. Please be aware some obstacles do exist. Ski and ride with care. For daily lift operation and snow conditions, visit the web site at www.mammothmountain.com, or call 1-888-766-9778. **JUNE MOUNTAIN** opens Thursday (12/16) with a 2 to 3 foot base; check the web at www.junemountain.com for more information.

Many snow-covered roads in Mono County offer a variety of scenery and terrain for X-COUNTRY SKIING, SNOWSHOEING and SNOWMOBILING. **TAMARACK CROSS COUNTRY SKI CENTER** in the Mammoth Lakes Basin is open with 19 miles of set track; call 1-760-934-5293 for more information. The **SNOPARK IN ROCK CREEK** at East Fork (Rock Creek) is open for the winter. Self issue parking permits are available on site, or can be purchased (for the day or season) in advance at many locations.

Visit the **MAMMOTH LAKES WELCOME CENTER** for current snow conditions, trail maps and avalanche risk; open daily 8:00am to 5:00pm or call 1-760-924-5500. The **EASTERN SIERRA AVALANCHE CENTER (ESAC)** offers avalanche advisories and an on-line discussion center for the region. For information, check the web site at www.esavalanche.org

BACKCOUNTRY: Backpackers should be prepared with winter gear for snowy/icy terrain, freezing temperatures and sudden weather changes. Recent snow makes trails difficult to locate and passes very slick. Most roads to trailheads are closed for the winter. **WILDERNESS PERMITS** are required for overnight travel all year long. Trailhead quotas, which daily limit the number of hikers on trails, are no longer in effect for Eastern Sierra wilderness areas. Self-issue permits can be obtained in the night boxes at the following locations: InterAgency Visitor Center (Lone Pine), Bishop Ranger Station, Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center, Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center (Lee Vining) and Bridgeport Ranger Station after office hours. Reservations for wilderness permits can be made up to six months in advance of the starting date of a trip, by phone at 1-760-873-2483, fax to 1-760-873-2484, or by mail - 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200, Bishop, CA 93514. The 2011 Mt. Whitney Lottery will occur in February and early March. For more information on wilderness permits, including an application form and fees, visit the Inyo National Forest web site at www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo.

FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Join in the 111th **Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count**, the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world; beginning 12/14/10 through 1/5/11. For over a hundred years, people have gathered together during the winter holiday season to count birds. All skill levels are encouraged to participate. Contact the following individuals for counts in the region:

Bishop - Saturday 12/18 - contact Chris Howard at chris93514@gmail.com

Lancaster - Saturday 12/18 - contact Nick & Mary Freeman at mnfreeman@earthlink.net

Sequoia National Park - Sunday 12/19 - contact Daniel Gammons at daniel.gammons@nps.gov

Yosemite National Park - Sunday 12/19 - contact Sarah Stock at sarah.stock@nps.gov

Ridgecrest/China Lake - Sunday 12/19 - contact Pete Woodman at kivabio@aol.com

Mono Basin - Tuesday 12/21 - contact Kristy Nelson at storm.petrel@hotmail.com

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK is open daily 10:00am to 3:00pm. Visitors must use over-snow transportation to access the park. Bring drinking water, food and plenty of warm clothes for a winter visit to Bodie (recreation fee area).

EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM in Independence is open from 10:00am to 5:00pm daily, with exhibits on Inyo County; including a significant collection of Native American baskets and artifacts from Manzanar NHS.

The Interpretive Center at **MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**, located 5 miles south of Independence, is open daily from 9:00am to 4:30pm. Check at the Interpretive Center or the web at www.nps.gov/manz for more information.

Visit the Beverly & Jim Rogers **MUSEUM OF LONE PINE FILM HISTORY**; with exhibits celebrating the heroes, the films and the locations of the many movies shot in the area. The museum is open daily at 10:00am; closing at 6:00pm Monday through Wednesday, at 7:00pm Thursday through Saturday and at 4:00pm on Sunday.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER (temporary) at Furnace Creek Ranch is open daily from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Ranger talks and other interpretive programs are presented daily. An evening program is presented at 7:00pm in a variety of locations near Furnace Creek (check at the Visitor Center). **SCOTTY'S CASTLE** has "Living History" tours from 9:00am to 5:00pm, and "Underground Mystery Tours" daily. Check the website at www.nps.gov/deva for more information.

BLM JAWBONE STATION REGIONAL OHV FACILITY is open 9:00am to 5:00pm daily for trip assistance. The station is located 25 miles north of Mojave on SR 14 for pre-trip information; call 1-760-373-1146.

Schedules of activities and information on points of interest throughout the Eastern Sierra Nevada and Northern Mojave Desert are available at the Visitor Center.

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